

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

Refer to: AD

ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 2004-05

**COURTESY AND RESPECT IN THE WORKPLACE**

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1. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this circular is to formalize policy and procedures regarding courtesy and respect in the workplace for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS). This policy is to ensure that all patients, their families; employees, and the general public are treated with dignity and respect whenever they encounter AAIHS employees, contractors, volunteers and others while seeking and receiving health care services or visiting the AAIHS work environment for any reason.
2. **BACKGROUND.** The single most important thing and AAIHS employee can offer our patients, co-workers, clients, customers and others are courtesy and respect in our day-to-day activities and interactions. The AAIHS is primarily concerned with the provision of quality health care. Quality of service is the number one priority for IHS. Since the employees of the AAIHS are almost always the first contact patients, customers, clients and the general public have with the IHS; the impression made by AAIHS employees is of the utmost concern. A first and often lasting impression of the AAIHS is set by first contacts. This first and/or continuing contact has the potential to color the perception of services to patients, clients, customers and the general public. Therefore, it is most important that all employee interactions with patients, co-workers, clients, customers and the general public be characterized by courtesy, respect and genuine efforts to fulfill the IHS Mission.
3. **AUTHORITY.** Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), "Supplemental Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees," July 30, 1996, Subpart C-"Conduct on the Job", 73.735-301."Courtesy and Consideration for Others". Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations Part 735, Employee Responsibilities and Conduct, "Standards of Ethical Conduct of Employees of the Executive Branch," revised January 1, 2003. Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual "Standards of Conduct," July 14, 1981 and Indian Health Manual, Part 3, Chapter 23, "Ethical and Professional Conduct of Health Care Providers.

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Distribution: All AAIHS Employees and Manual Holders

Date: September 29, 2004

4. **POLICY.** It shall be the policy of the AAIHS to maintain especially high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct; courtesy, consideration, and a deep sense of responsibility for the public trust, promptness in dealing with all persons and when serving the public, to ensure the proper performance of government business; to provide for the continued trust and confidence of all persons who enter the AAIHS work environment or are encountered in a professional capacity. It shall also be the policy of the AAIHS to assure that violations of this policy be appropriately addressed by supervisors and managers.
5. **RESPONSIBILITY.** All AAIHS employees must be familiar with and abide by the specific ethical codes and mandatory reporting requirements in regard to misconduct of an employee in the workplace.
  - A. **Area Director.** The Area Director is responsible for ensuring that:
    - (1) His/her conduct is in accordance with this policy and serves as an example for all subordinate AAIHS staff.
    - (2) Compliance of this policy is implemented through out AAIHS (i.e. area office, service unit facilities, health centers and clinics.
    - (3) Training is provided to employees, supervisors, and managers.
    - (4) He/she is directly involved in the guidance of a local investigation of any complaints or unethical behavior or misconduct by employees.
  - B. **Chief Executive Officer/Health Center Directors.** Responsible for ensuring that:
    - (1) His/her conduct is in accordance with this policy and serves as an example for all subordinate staff.
    - (2) Their staffs are in compliance with this policy.
    - (3) This policy is posted in appropriate places in plain sight of anyone entering the work area.
    - (4) Training on customer service, courtesy and respect in the workplace and the standards of conduct is provided on an annual basis.
    - (5) Any complaint, report, or allegations of violations of this policy whether written or oral are investigated and documented.
    - (6) Appropriate corrective action is initiated when violations of this policy are administratively supported.

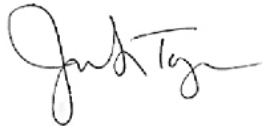
C. Supervisors/Managers. Supervisors and Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- (1) His/her conduct is in accordance with this policy and serves as an example for all subordinate staff;
- (2) They are personally familiar with this policy and the Standards of Conduct.
- (3) Their subordinates are familiar with and meet the requirements outlined in the policy regarding standards of courtesy and respect in the workplace;
- (4) They take appropriate action when a subordinate staff is found to have violated this policy;
- (5) Orientation and training is provided on an annual basis with documentation showing which subordinate employees attended the training;
- (6) All allegations of policy violation are reported through the next higher-level manager through the CEO to the Area Director.

D. Employee. All Employees are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the following principles:

- (1) Courtesy must be shown in day-to-day interaction with patients, co-workers, clients and customers. Employees shall, at all times, be polite to and considerate of other employees, and shall respect their needs and concerns in the work environment;
- (2) Customers (guests, patients, physicians, and other employees) are treated with courtesy, respect, and caring behaviors. Employees are to respond quickly and appropriately to customer requests and anticipate customer needs and initiate action to meet those needs;
- (3) Immediately report violations of this policy or of ethical standards to their supervisor or other appropriate official either in writing or orally. It is strongly recommended that verbal reporting be followed up with written documentation. It is unethical not to report known violations of this policy or violations of ethical standards;
- (4) Present a positive image of AAIHS through professional appearance and behavior; and.
- (5) Attend orientation and training annually on customer service, courtesy and respect in the workplace and conduct provided at your facility.

6. **DOCUMENTING EMPLOYEES CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE.** When employees demonstrate conduct that violates this policy, the supervisor must document the subordinate employee's conduct. The incident may be reported using the Report of Conduct/Performance Incident form (Exhibit I). This document serves as a record of the incident, discussion with the employee, as well as a record of recommendations or follow-up action by the supervisor and/or employee. Use of this form is optional. It is provided as a tool to assist supervisors in documenting what corrective action, as been taken, as well as documenting progressive discipline, when the need arises. A copy of this form is available on-line at the Division of Human Resources website at [www2.ihs.gov/aaodhr](http://www2.ihs.gov/aaodhr).
7. **CONSEQUENCES.** Each employee is responsible for their personal conduct and should be held accountable for that conduct as follows:
  - (a) When an employee exhibits exemplary courtesy, respect and helpfulness positive recognition is should be used to reinforce and reward the employee.
  - (b) When an employee's conduct violates this policy appropriate action must be taken to correct the conduct.
  - (c) Corrective action(s) should be progressive as a general rule. However, disciplinary and/or adverse actions may be used when lesser corrective steps fail to convince the employee to change his/her conduct.
8. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This policy is effective on the date of signature and shall remain in effect until canceled or superceded.



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